

The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Illustrations and Photographs
of John Wilkes Booth

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

ENABLED C. B. BRISTOL, TO MURKIN THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS

Assassination of Abraham Lincoln—Bristol Had Wax Bust Made Which
President and of Secretary of State Seward.



PHOTOGRAPH
GIVEN BY
W. BOOTH
TC

W. R. BRISTOL
Photographer
New Orleans
March 28, 1864

Dear Johnson Sir.

Miss Grimes of 12th &
Magnolia Street, New Orleans, La.

Dear Johnson Sir,
I have just come in
from New Orleans and
will enclose you
a picture of myself
better (I think) than
the one I think, that
I have given you.

Yours ever truly
John Wilkes Booth

LETTER FROM JOHN WILKES BOOTH TO COL. R. M. JOHNSON OF ST. LOUIS.

Written in 1864, while Booth was playing in New Orleans.

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.

A photograph of Wilkes Booth was the foundation of a fortune made in a few months by C. B. Bristol, a St. Louis showman who knew the actor before the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

Bristol, who retired from business nine years ago and now lives at No. 412 Cleveland avenue, was managing Burnell's Museum at Fourth and Pine streets, when Wilkes Booth played in St. Louis just prior to his Eastern tour, which ended in the assassination of President Lincoln in Washington.

The museum proprietor and the tragedian were acquainted and often met at night, when the theater and museum were closed, to dine at a restaurant kept by Martins, a Spaniard, once famous as a juggler. It was on an occasion of this sort that Booth presented his friend Bristol with a photo-

graph of himself, taken that week.

"Booth closed here and went to Philadelphia," said Mr. Bristol, when seen at his home by a Sunday Republic writer. "From Philadelphia he went to Washington and there he committed the murder, the circumstances of which are so well known. It was about midnight that the dispatches telling of the assassination of the President reached St. Louis.

"Naturally, there was great excitement. The town was in an uproar as soon as the news spread, and while every one was running about asking questions, I got down to business.

"It occurred to me that there was a chance to make money out of that photograph.

"The next train to New York departed at 4 a. m., and I was on it, with my photo-

graph of the assassin. When I got to New

York I went immediately to Vennucci's wax-figure museum on Broadway and had

wax busts of Lincoln, Seward and Booth made as quickly as the work could be done.

"With the three busts I went to Springfield, Ill., to open a show.

"I went all over the country after that and, with nothing in my tent, but those three little busts, that had cost me \$600, I cleared more than \$30,000. I then sold the busts for \$15,000 to Billy Coop, who was connected with Barnum's circus. I do not know what eventually became of them.

"I have never believed that Booth was killed," continued Bristol, "but I never heard of him after the assassination. I believe that Edwin Booth knew his brother was living when, upon his deathbed, he said, 'I wish I could see my brother before I die.'

Bristol has had a checkered career as a

showman and has traveled all over the country with different attractions. He introduced Miss Christine, the two-headed woman, in St. Louis during the war and toured the United States with her several reasons before selling his contract to D. K. Prescott for \$23,000.

"I heard of the wonderful two-headed slave girl owned by Joseph Smith at Goodman, Miss.," said Bristol, "and I determined to brave the dangers of venturing into the Confederate lines to bring her to St. Louis. I made quite a neat sum out of her before selling out. She is now under the management of Smith, from whom I bought her, and she will be exhibited at the World's Fair."

After Bristol retired he went to Alaska to prospect for gold in the Cape Nome district, and met with success. He has spent five years there, coming back to St. Louis

at intervals. He owns thirty-five claims, some of which have been operated to advantage.

"I have enough property in the Nome country to make me immensely wealthy," said Bristol pouring a score of heavy nuggets from a buckskin pouch upon a table.

"These are samples of gold from my claims." He also exhibited several bottles of gold dust, which were the results of "washing pay dirt" from his mines.

Bristol has an interesting collection of curios from Alaska, among them several walrus tusks, upon which pictures were carved by Alaskan Indians, and several miniature Alaskan canoes or "kyaks."

Bristol is an enthusiastic gold miner and believes that there is an opportunity for the rapid acquisition of wealth in the Alaskan gold fields. He will return to Alaska in the spring to resume operations upon his claims.

KENTUCKIAN FINDS BOOTH'S PORTRAIT

WALTON, Ky., Oct. 12 (A.P.)—After two years of search, C. Spencer Chambers of Walton has found an oil painting of John Wilkes Booth, Abraham Lincoln's assassin, believed to be the only one in existence.

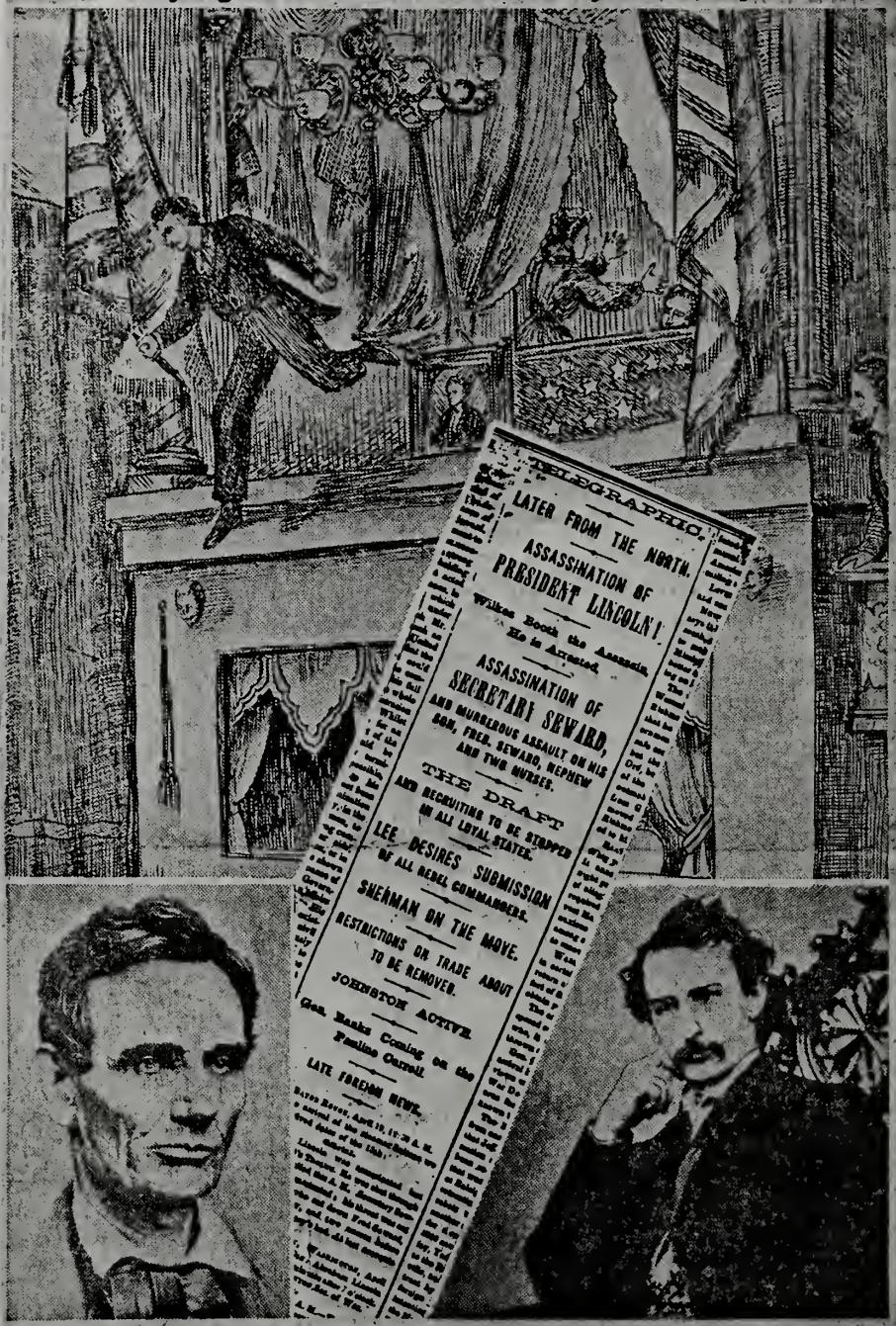
The canvas which he purchased is 8 by 8½ inches and was painted by John Aubrey, Cincinnati artist. Painted shortly after Booth appeared in the old National theatre in Cincinnati, in 1863, the picture shows the famous actor wearing a small goatee. Sold by Aubrey to Frank A. Walz, a saloonkeeper, the picture remained in obscurity for many years before Chambers found it.



JOHN WILKES BOOTH

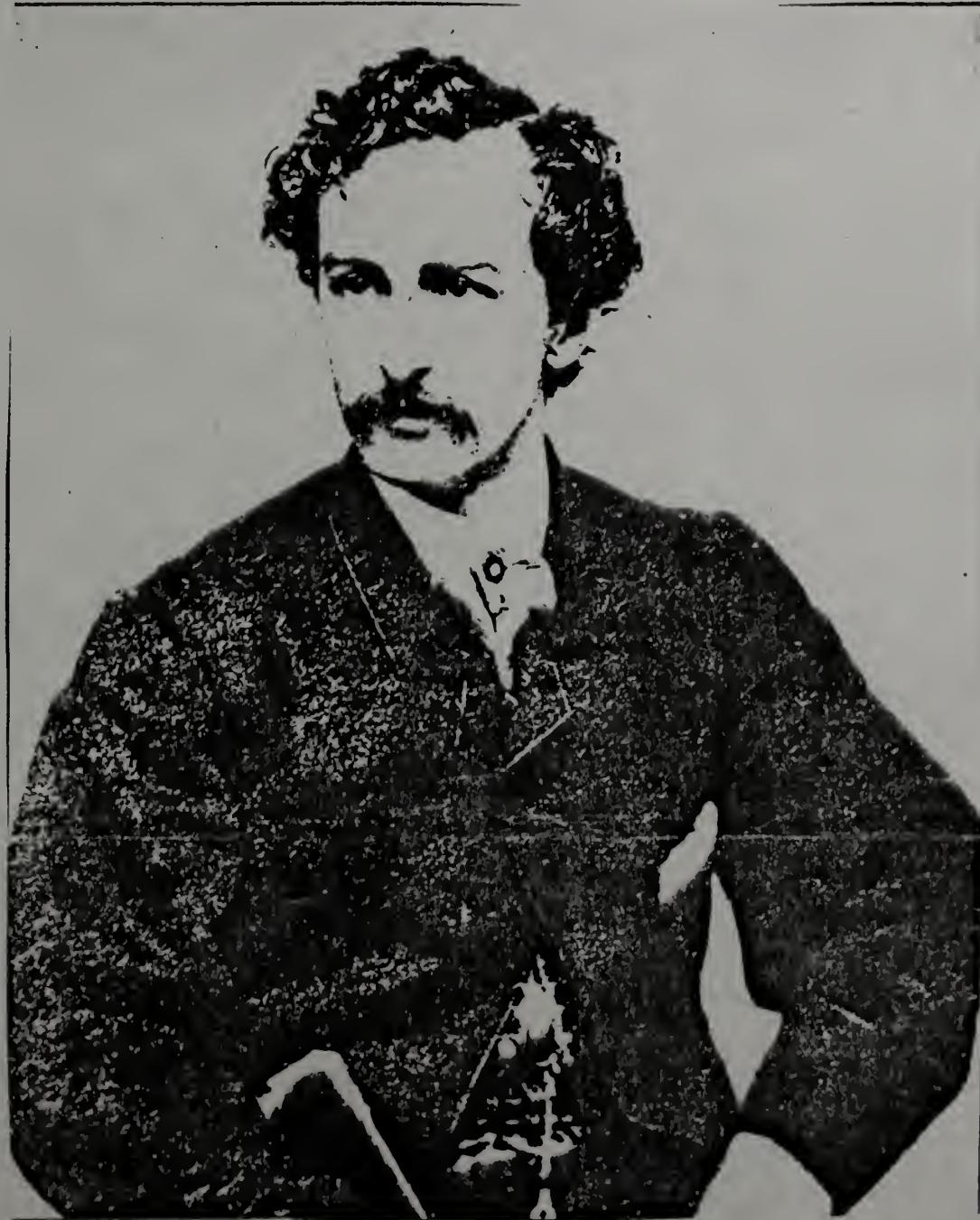
Autographed photograph presented to
Mrs. James Seymour in New Orleans in 1864

Slaying of Lincoln Recalled by Birthday



An old sketch furnishes a general, if not a very accurate idea of the tragedy of Lincoln's assassination, recollections of which are stirred by his birthday today. John Wilkes Booth, whose photograph is shown lower right, is depicted in the drawing as he leaped from the presidential box after shooting the president and stabbing other occupants of the box. The head which the Daily Picayune used on the first story of the affair is reproduced here.

At right—John Wilkes Booth, assassin of President Lincoln.



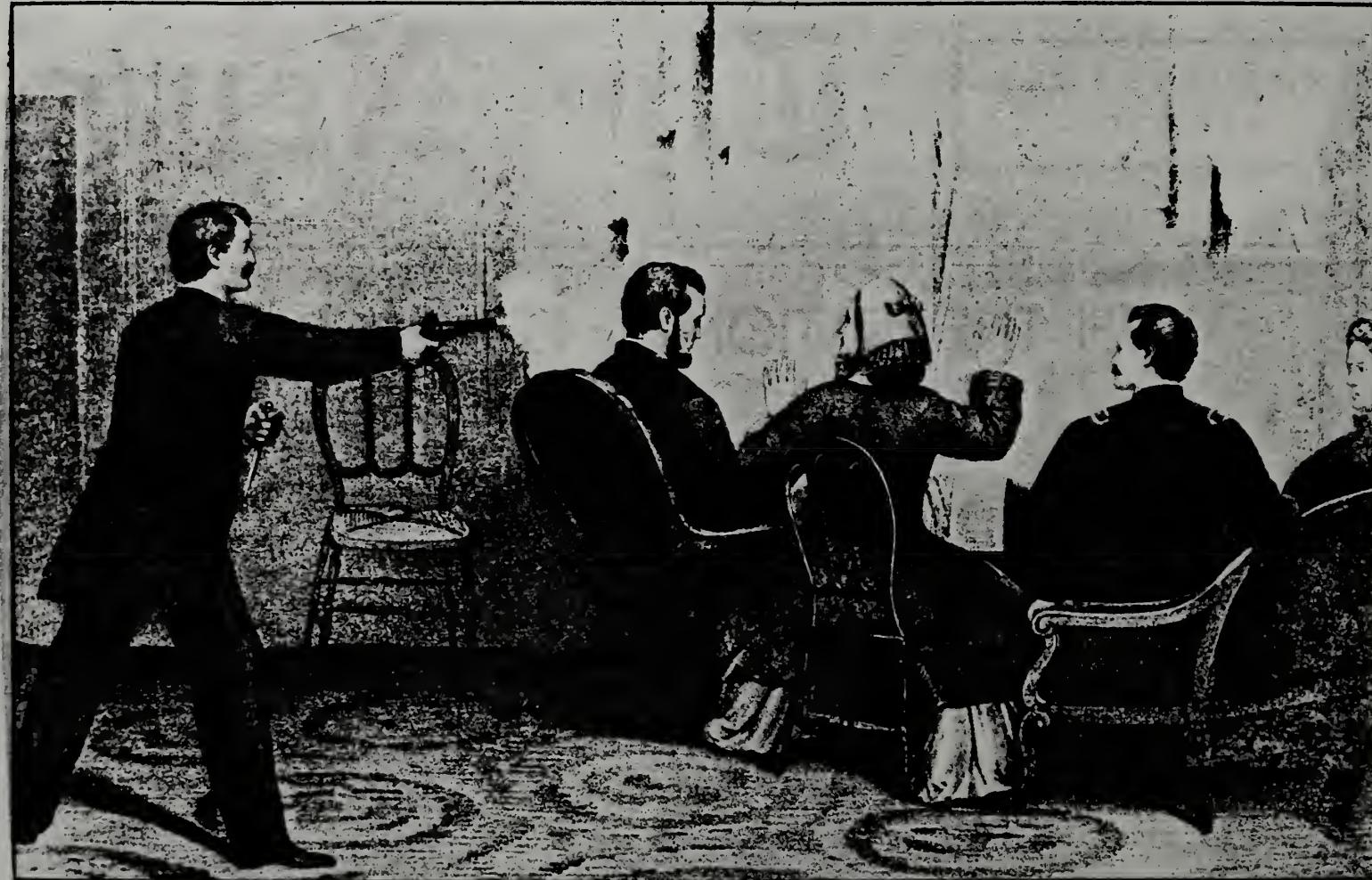


THE THREE BOOTH BROTHERS
in "Julius Caesar". Their only appearance together on the stage.
See next page.



John Wilkes Booth, the actor who shot President Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theater. This photograph was taken only a short time before the assassination.

NEL, FORT WAYNE, INDIANA.

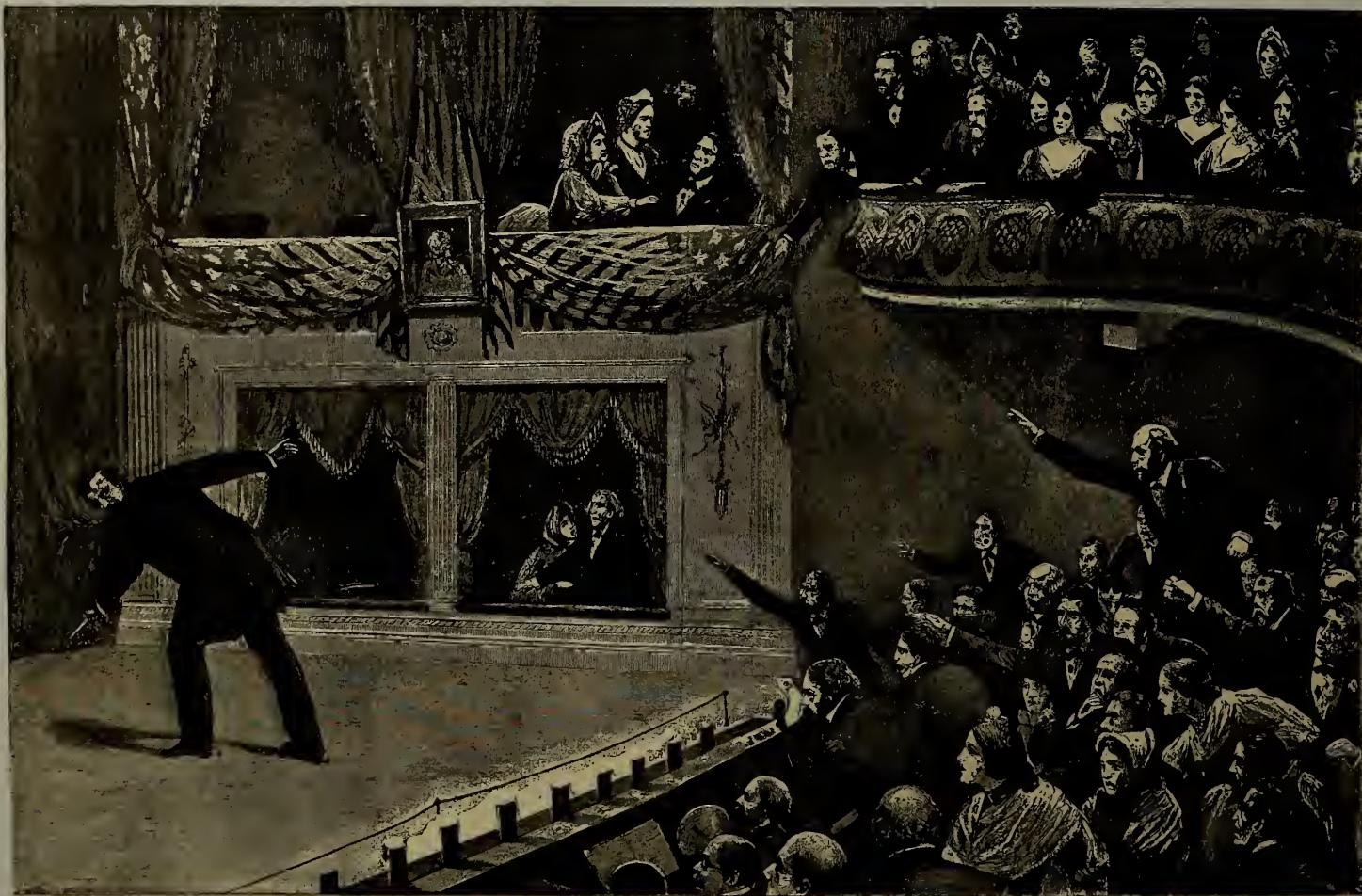


Assassination of President Lincoln at Ford's Theatre, Washington, D. C., the night of April 14, 1865, from a colored lithograph by Kellogg, of Hartford, Conn. Left to right: Booth, President Lincoln, Mrs. Lincoln, Major Rathbun and Miss Harris.

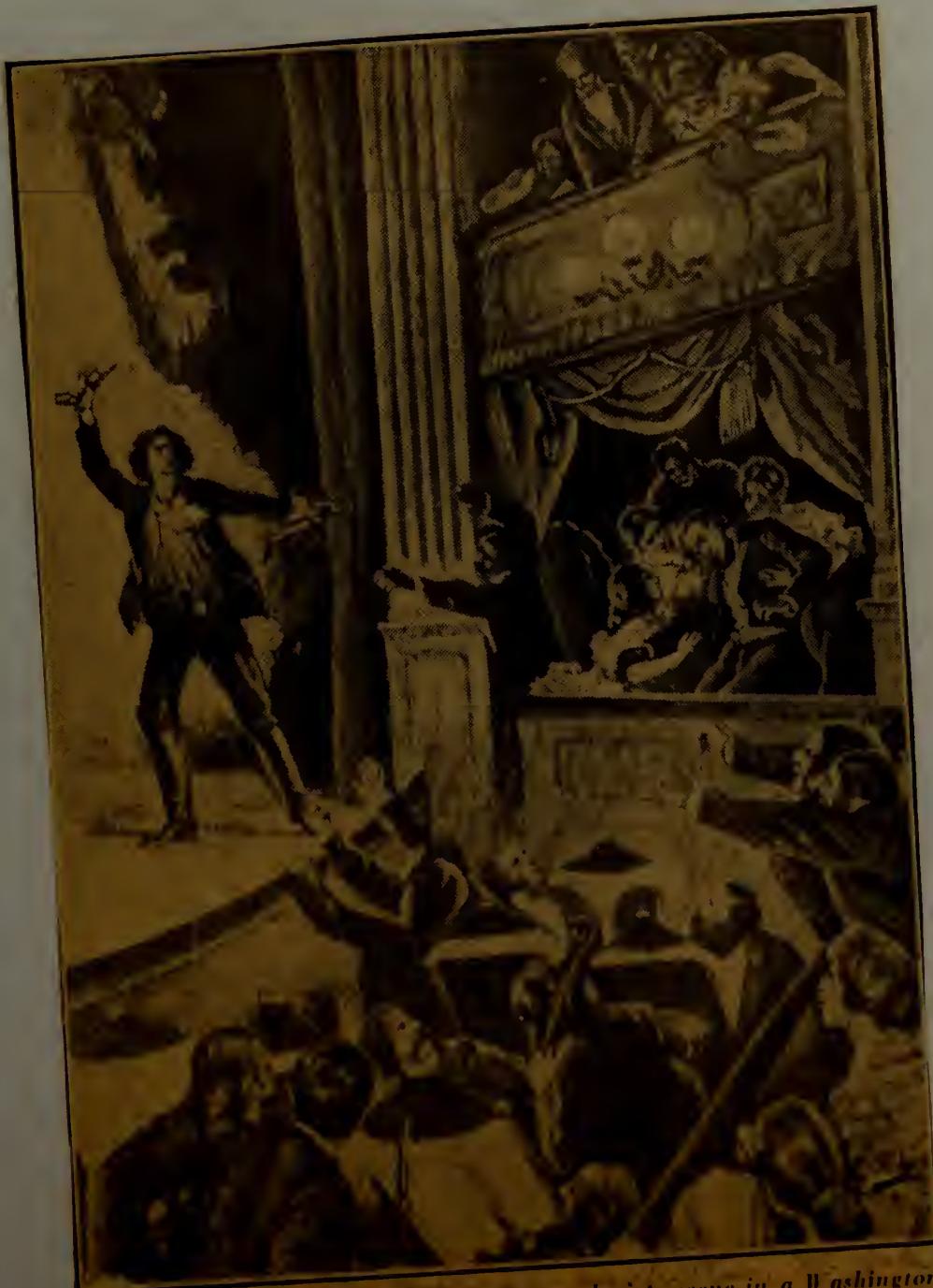


THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

1776-1876



ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN, AT FORD'S THEATER, WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL 15, 1865.

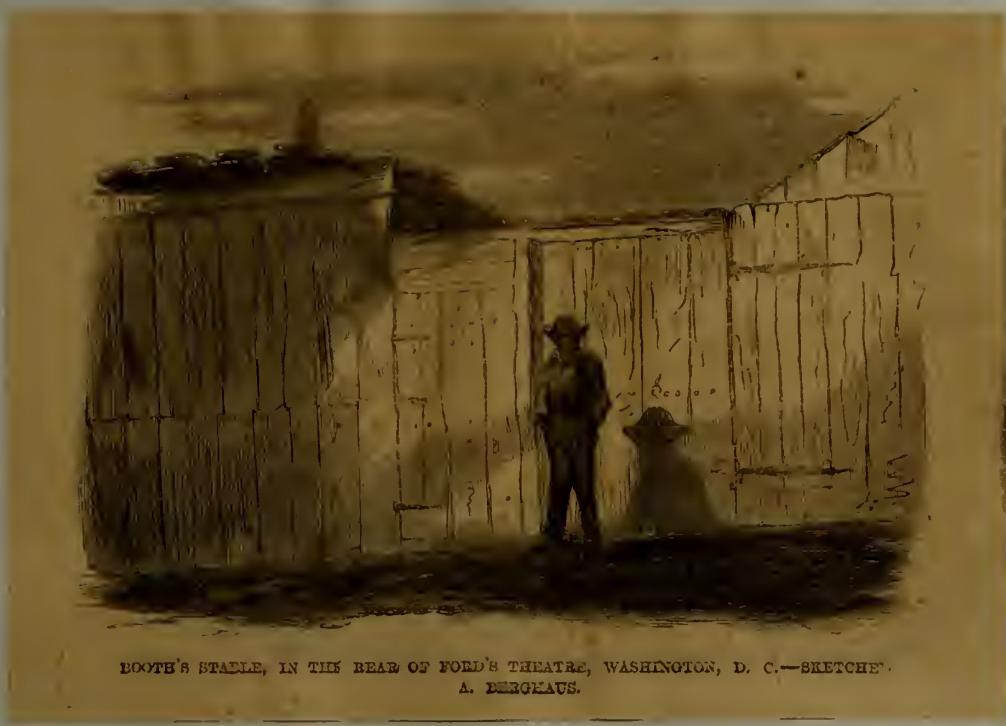


The shot that shocked a nation! Drawing depicts scene in a Washington theatre as John Wilkes Booth fires fatal shot at President Lincoln.



REAR OF FORD'S THEATRE, SHOWING THE SMALL DOOR BY WHICH BOOTH MADE HIS ESCAPE.
SKETCHED BY A. BERGHAUS.

Federal, May 15 65



BOOTH'S STABLE, IN THE REAR OF FORD'S THEATRE, WASHINGTON, D. C.—SKETCHED.
A. BERGHAUS.

Feber May 15 186



SMALL DOORS LEADING TO THE PRESIDENT'S BOX, FORD'S THEATRE,
WASHINGTON, SHOWING THE APERTURE MADE BY BOOTH IN THE
CORNER OF THE PANEL.—SKETCHED BY A. BERGHAUS.

Leslie May, 15 '65

WEEKLY.

[MAY 6, 1865.



SECRETARY SEWARD'S ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION, APRIL 14, 1865—THE ASSASSIN TURNING UPON
MR. FREDERICK SEWARD AT THE DOOR OF THE SICK-ROOM.



FORD'S THEATRE AT WASHINGTON.



VIEW OF A PORTION OF 10TH STREET, OPPOSITE FORD'S THEATRE.



Booth.

Mr. Lincoln.

Mrs. Lincoln.

Miss Harris.

Major Rathbun.

ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN IN HIS PRIVATE BOX AT FORD'S THEATRE, WASHINGTON, APRIL 14.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST, ALBERT BERGHaus.



RUINS OF GARRETT'S BARN AND OUT-HOUSES, NEAR PORT ROYAL, WHERE BOOTH WAS SHOT.—[SKETCHED BY W. N. WALTON.]



GARRETT'S HOUSE, WHERE BOOTH DIED.—[SKETCHED BY W. N. WALTON.]



HAROLD'S HOUSE, NEAR THE WASHINGTON NAVY-YARD.—[SKETCHED BY M'CALLUM.]

THE ASSASSINATION.

IN addition to the interesting sketches which we gave last week relating to BOOTH's capture we are able this week to give illustrations of GARRETT's house, on the porch of which BOOTH died, the ruins of GARRETT's barn in which the assassin was shot, and the house in which HAROLD resided near the Navy-yard at Washington.

The case against the assassins develops new features. President JOHNSON has issued a proclamation declaring that there is evidence in the Military Bureau which implicates in the assassination JEFFERSON DAVIS, JACOB THOMPSON, C. C. CLAY, GEORGE SANDERS, BEVERLY TUCKER, and other rebels, and offering \$100,000 for the capture within the United States of DAVIS, and \$25,000 each for the capture of the others. What this evidence is we can only vaguely conjecture, and therefore leave to further development. The fact that GEORGE SANDERS and BEVERLY TUCKER have, after most sturdily protesting their innocence, deemed it after all wiser to flee from justice, will not tend to produce a conviction of their innocence.

We give an illustration on page 317 of a meeting held in Johnson Square, Savannah, April 22, to take action in regard to the death of President LINCOLN.

Wasp 10 1/2
5/20/65



THE ARREST OF BOOTH, THE ASSASSIN.—THE DYING MURDERER DRAWN FROM THE BARN WHERE HE HAD TAKEN REFUGE, ON GARRETT'S FARM, NEAR PORT ROYAL, VA., APRIL 26, 1865.
FROM A SKETCH BY AN EYE-WITNESS.

MAY 13, 1865.]

FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER.

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BOOTH ESCAPING ON HORSEBACK FROM THE REAR OF THE THEATRE AFTER THE MURDER OF THE PRESIDENT.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST.

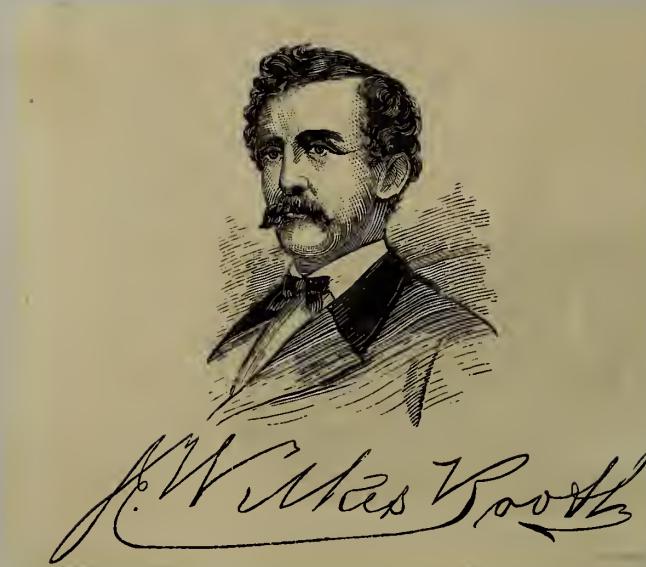
MAY 20, 1865.]

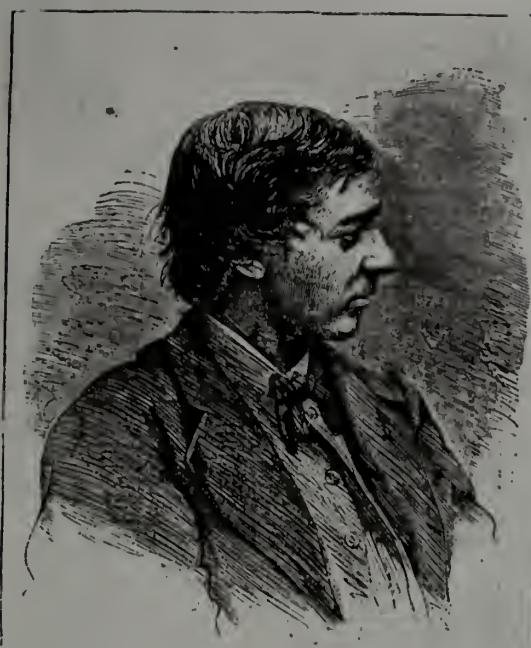
FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER.

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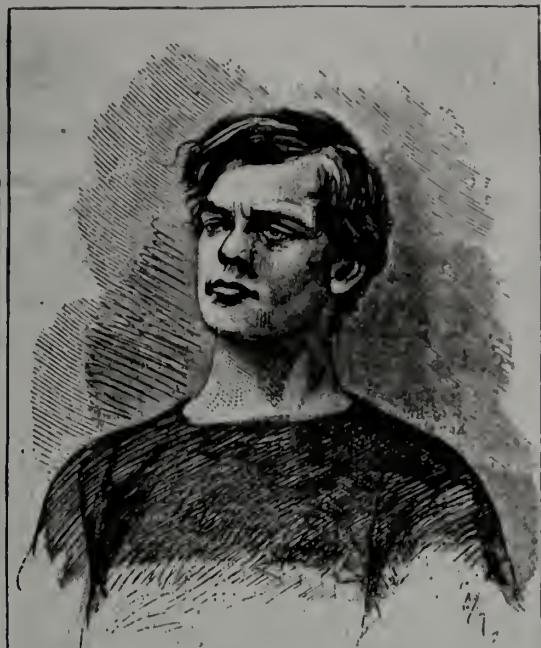


INTERIOR OF CHIEF DETECTIVE COL. BAKER'S OFFICE, OPPOSITE WILLARD'S HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D. C.—COL. BAKER LAYING DOWN THE PLAN OF BOOTH'S CAPTURE TO HIS CHIEF SUBORDINATE. FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST, W. T. CRANE.





DAVID G. HAROLD.



LEWIS PAYNE.



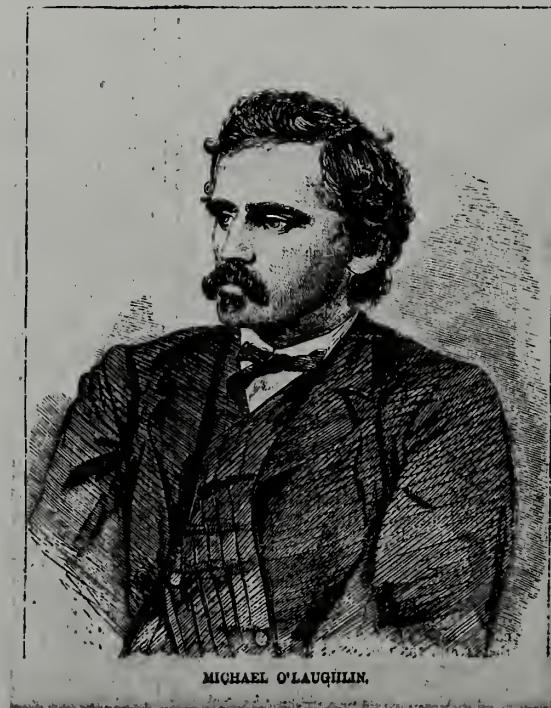
SAMUEL ARNOLD.



J. W. ATZEROTT.



EDWARD SPANGLER.



MICHAEL O'LAUGHLIN.

AMERICANA

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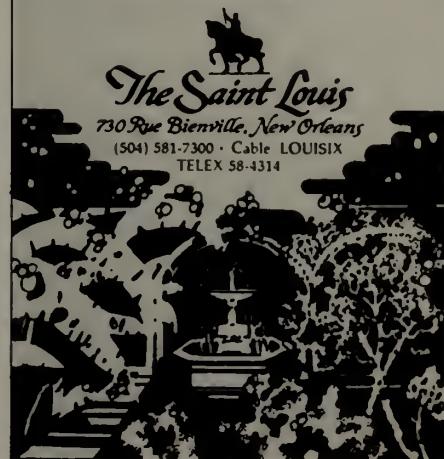
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Cover: Three members of the Federal Music Society Orchestra rehearse for a chamber-music performance in the home of musical-instrument collector Eric Selch. From left to right are Eric Selch, playing an 1805 serpent, Gene Scholtens, on a 1770's bassoon, and Richard Wagner, on an 1840 clarinet. A story about Selch's collection begins on page 62. The photograph is by C. Brownie Harris/Black Star.

A WELL-KEPT SECRET

Most of our guests have been our guests before. And what they know about us, they keep to themselves. With good reason. Because if everybody were in on the secret, they would find it next to impossible to make a reservation.



The Cloister's great setup for the tennis sets.

Right beside your charming Cloister accommodations, 18 fast-dry clay courts, always in superb shape. Staffed by expert teaching pros. And with Sea Island's great alternatives — 54 holes of golf, 5 miles of private beach, beach club, dancing, skeet, riding, biking, jogging, sailing. And outstanding dining. Call toll-free 800-841-3223 (Georgia 800-342-6874). Cloister Hotel, Sea Island, Georgia 31561.

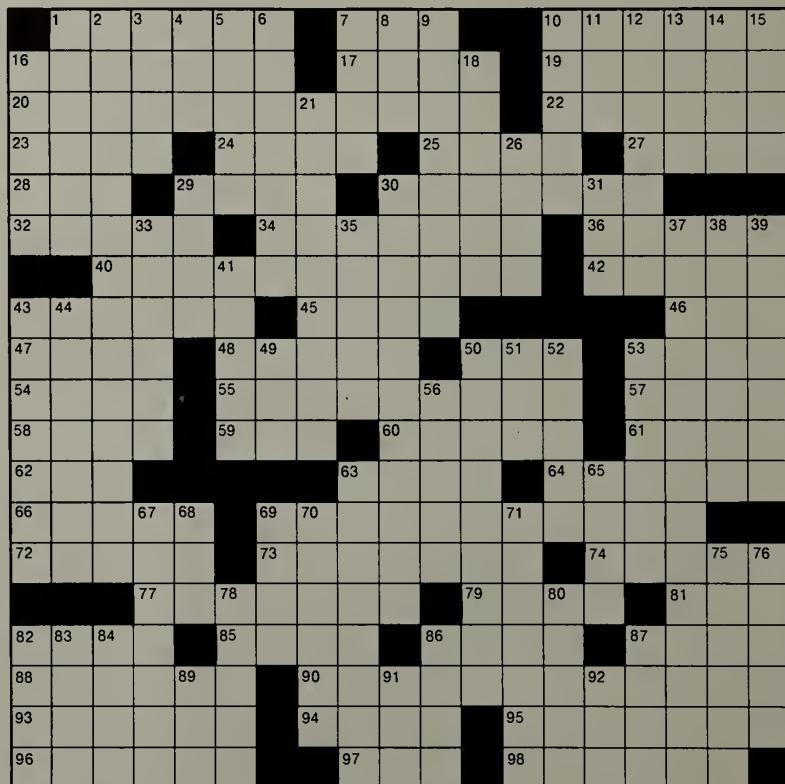
Sea Island

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

The assassination of President Abraham Lincoln at the hand of John Wilkes Booth on the night of April 14, 1865, has always fascinated collectors, and crossword author Jack Luzzatto hopes that the event holds the same attraction for puzzle fans. Some of the proper names necessary

for the solution will be found in the article about Booth that starts on page 52 of this issue; all others appear in Webster's Biographical Dictionary. The solution to the puzzle can be found printed upside-down on page 97.

John Wilkes Booth



72 Take ___ shot at, fire hastily
 73 Meals
 74 Supply with weapons
 77 Three infielders
 79 Not active any more: Abbr.
 81 Golf start
 82 Capitol top
 85 A ___ she (a person)
 86 Lincoln's wife, who loved the theatre
 87 Remains in place
 88 Pertaining to an egg
 90 Plotters who planned to kidnap Lincoln (at first)
 93 Cheap whiskey
 94 ___ -Jorgensen rifle, U.S. Army weapon, 1892-98
 95 Lack of funds
 96 Johnson who succeeded Lincoln at the White House
 97 Seaport: Abbr.
 98 Pass, as time

1. Close-fitting woman's hat
 2. Union man
 3. Sailors, for short
 4. Abstract being
 5. Pertaining to wheels
 6. Squared stones, in masonry
 7. Italian greeting or good-bye
 8. Infinite skill
 9. Stately or lordly
 10. Swiss city
 11. Number of shots in derringer used to kill Lincoln
 12. Wilbur's flying brother
 13. Honk
 14. Fake
 15. Stop the rush
 16. Frothing
 18. Latest
 21. Championships of causes
 26. Authentic

29. Dry and withered
 30. "___ Cousin," play by Tom Taylor that Lincoln saw before dying
 31. Milk
 33. Speaker platforms
 35. Holy cup sought by knights
 37. Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley
 38. Lincoln's Secretary of War
 39. Pillaging
 41. Lily plant of cactus country
 43. Type of old walking cane
 44. Teeth or keys
 49. High tennis shot
 50. Animal cracker
 51. Toper
 52. This began less than one month after the assassination of Lincoln
 53. Formosa
 56. Prevailing conditions or such; for short: Brit.
 63. Powerful rulers
 65. Travois
 67. Giver of tags or names
 68. Former price office
 69. Mastery or superiority: Scot.
 70. Make fun of
 71. Medicine to contract the pupil
 75. Imperfect or damaged paper
 76. Not neat
 78. Nobody's turtle dove
 80. Austrian Alpine region
 82. Mrs. Copperfield
 83. Hot chamber
 84. Doctor who treated Booth's broken leg
 86. Master sergeant: Abbr.
 87. Run down
 89. Yes vote
 91. Snooze
 92. Medical group

by Jack Luzzatto



A Photographic Survey of John Wilkes Booth

A couple publishes its collection of a famous actor and his infamous act

by Gary Walther

SIX YEARS AGO Richard Gutman was rummaging through an antiques shop in Cambridge, Massachusetts, when he came across a photograph of John Wilkes Booth that showed the famous actor, who assassinated Abraham Lincoln on April 14, 1865, dressed in a heavy winter coat and resting his hand on a book. Gutman, then twenty-five, had been collecting Booth memorabilia since he was thirteen, so he was naturally delighted to discover a picture of Booth that he had never seen before. The photograph cost only fifty cents, and it started Gutman wondering how many other pictures of Booth were scattered about in private collections, archives, and antiques shops.

Soon after his discovery, Gutman decided to track down every extant image of Booth, and he enlisted the assistance of his friend Kellie (they have since married), who quickly became a Boothophile in her own right.

The Gutmans spent much of their spare time during the next six years scouring antiques shops and delving into archives such as the Harvard Theater Collection and the McLellan

Lincoln Library at Brown University. Certain rare photographs of Booth—such as the one taken at his autopsy aboard the U.S.S. *Montauk* late in April, 1865—eluded them; but they collected twenty different *cartes de visite* (photographic calling cards popular in the 1860's and 1870's) of Booth, as well as one hundred other *cartes de visite* and photographs of people and places related to the assassination. Drawing from the archives they visited and their own collection, the Gutmans published forty-four of those photographs in March, 1979, in a book, *John Wilkes Booth Himself*.

"We're not apologists for Booth," says Richard, explaining the couple's interest in the assassin. "The enormity of his deed precludes that. But we are fascinated by Booth as a romantic, enigmatic character—by how a talented actor became unhinged enough to assassinate Lincoln."

John Wilkes Booth Himself is in fact the Gutmans' attempt to widen the historical record and show Booth before he committed his infamous deed. Besides the *cartes de visite*, the book includes two photographs taken

by Mathew Brady and Alexander Gardner at Lincoln's second inauguration, on March 4, 1865, in which Booth is plainly visible on the balcony above the President. There are also several photographs of paintings dealing with the assassination, which Gutman terms artistic fantasies. Accompanying the pictures are essays that portray Booth through the eyes of his contemporaries, chart the history of each photograph, and discuss the art of photography in the mid-nineteenth century.

"In the early days," says Kellie, "it seemed that we were turning up a new Booth photograph every week." A cousin who had recently purchased an old house in Sheffield, Massachusetts, found in a mountain of papers left by the previous owner a composite photograph of Booth surrounded by six of the men indicted for conspiring to kill Lincoln. A very rare *carte*



The popular assassination souvenir at top depicts Booth, derringer in hand, as an agent of the devil. Gutman obtained the letter fragment above from descendants of Junius Booth, the brother of John Wilkes.

de visite showing Booth in front of a painted landscape backdrop was found in a shoe box full of *cartes de visite* purchased by a friend.

Rare images, though, were the exception: in general, the Gutmans found portraits of Booth fairly easy to come by, for a number of reasons. As Richard points out, Booth was enamored with his own image and had himself photographed often. "Booth may be this country's vainest assassin," Richard says, noting that Booth was always dressed in the latest fashions of the period.

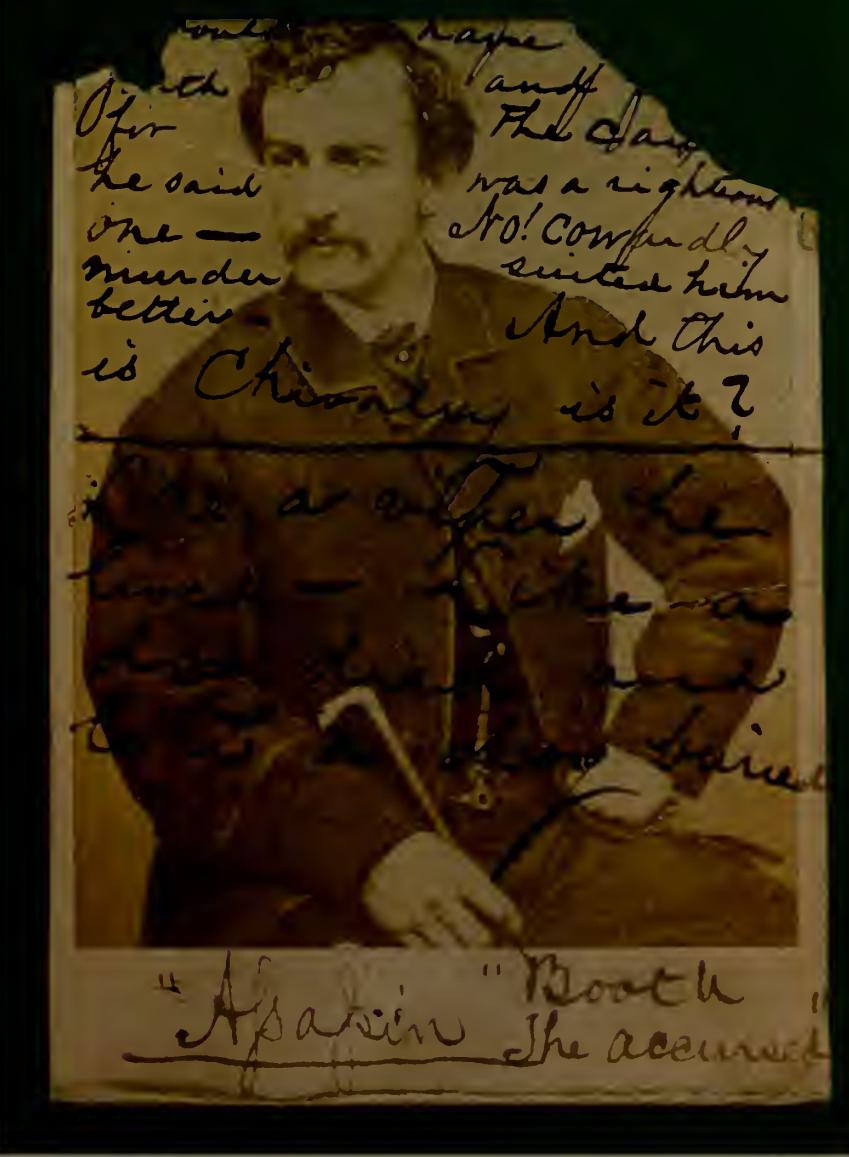
Booth's fame as an actor also meant that his picture was often pirated and sold by other photographers, while his subsequent infamy spurred entrepreneurs seeking to profit from the assassination to print up scores of portraits. Ironically, the assassin was more in demand than his victim: while photographs of Lincoln sold for a dime late in April and May of 1865, Booth's image was hawked at newsstands for twenty-five cents. "In fact," says Richard, "the government issued an edict on May 2, 1865, prohibiting the sale of Booth's likeness. It was impossible to enforce, and it was rescinded twenty-six days later."

In addition to their photographs, the Gutmans' collection of Booth memorabilia includes a library of more than one hundred volumes about Booth and the Booth family and a miscellany of playbills, letters, and prints that are arrayed on what Richard humorously calls the Booth family wall.

The Gutmans' most recent acquisition is an 1865 edition of *The Life, Crime, and Capture of John Wilkes Booth*, which they received as a gift from the widow of a fellow member of the Lincoln Group of Boston. The book is a series of dispatches by George Townsend, a reporter who covered the capture of Booth and the trial of the conspirators for the *New York World*. The volume is especially rare because it contains an extra dispatch—a firsthand report of the conspiracy trial—that is not included in



At top two cartes de visite taken in 1862 or 1863 flank a third with a curse written on the back. The inscription on the bottom picture was added by the daughter of a War Department telegraph operator who received it in connection with the manhunt for Booth.





Reproduced from the painting "The Death of Booth," this rare carte de visite shows Booth in the flaming tobacco barn on Garrett's farm in Port Royal, Virginia, at the moment he was allegedly shot by a soldier named Boston Corbett.

most other editions. The Gutmans also possess a transcript of the conspiracy trial printed in 1865 and an account by Thomas A. Jones, a Maryland farmer and Confederate sympathizer, detailing his part in Booth's escape; both items were spotted by Kellie in booksellers' catalogues. Richard's sentimental favorite, though, is the edition of Philip Van Doren Stern's book *The Man Who Killed Lincoln* that he read at age thirteen and that sparked his interest in Booth.

The Gutmans' collection affords some fascinating glimpses into the country's responses to its first assassination. Written over the photograph sent out by the War Department during the manhunt for Booth, for example, is the inscription "Like a viper he lived—Like a dog died and like a dog buried." (Booth's body was secretly interred beneath a section of the Washington Arsenal Penitentiary in Washington, D.C.) Not everyone scorned Booth, however: one of the most interesting items in the collection is a small photograph of Booth pasted to an oval mount with patriotic motifs that Richard believes was made by a Booth sympathizer.

Gutman's assassination souvenirs

include an 1865 photograph of the playbill for *Our American Cousin*, the play Lincoln saw the night he was shot: flanking two tickets pasted to the bottom are pictures of Laura Keene, the leading lady, and Booth. "The demand for souvenirs was insatiable," says Richard, holding up one of the more curious ones, an eight-by-ten photograph of the key to the Old Capitol Prison cell block where the conspirators were held.

In addition to collecting Booth memorabilia, the Gutmans belong to the Surratt Society, a group interested in Mary Surratt, who owned the Washington boarding house where the conspirators met (she was later hanged); the Gutmans have taken the society's twelve-hour tour, which retraces Booth's escape route. Richard has also produced "The Assassin's Act," a sixteen-minute slide show that uses four slide projectors, narration, and music to tell the story of the assassination and the conspiracy trial. Although he produces slide shows to accompany museum exhibits and corporate sales presentations, Richard made "The Assassin's Act" simply "to assemble what I had already learned about Booth and the assassination in

a new and different way."

The Gutmans' interest in Booth shows no sign of flagging. They are still searching for photographs to round out their collection, especially some that they have read about in Booth literature but have never seen, such as a portrait of Booth in an Indian costume, a print of which was burned, along with the other articles in Booth's trunk, by his brother Edwin in 1873. "After all," says Richard, "there is always something new to learn, and you never know when another Booth photograph will turn up."

Richard and Kellie Gutman's *John Wilkes Booth Himself* is \$18.50 postpaid from Hired Hand Press, P.O. Box 426, Dover, Massachusetts 02030. The Surratt Society's tour of Booth's escape route will be given April 12 and September 20. Led by assassination authority Dr. James O. Hall, the 12-hour tour begins at 8 A.M. at society headquarters in Clinton, Maryland. The first stop is Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., and the tour ends at the site of the Garrett farm in Port Royal, Virginia, where Booth was killed. The tour costs \$12 for society members; \$14 for non-members. Write the Surratt Society, 9110 Brandywine Road, Clinton, Maryland 20735 or call (301) 868-1121.



Richard and Kellie Gutman display some of the items from their large collection of Booth memorabilia.

